Claims:

1. A surfactant composition comprising a diol derivative (hereinafter referred to as "component (A)" represented by the formula (I) and a surfactant (hereinafter referred to as "component (B)"):

$$R^3$$
 $CH-OR^2$ 
 $CH-OH$ 
 $R^4$ 
 $(I)$ 

wherein one of  $R^3$  and  $R^4$  is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 4 to 22 carbon atoms and the other is a hydrogen atom and  $R^2$  is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 18 carbons.

2. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1, wherein the component (A) is a diol derivative-containing composition obtained in a production method comprising a step (1) and a step (2):

step 1: a step of supplying a 1,2-epoxyalkane
(hereinafter referred to as "1,2-epoxyalkane (II)")
represented by the formula (II) and an alcohol (hereinafter
referred to as "alcohol (III)") represented by the formula
(III) in the following molar ratio: 1,2-epoxyalkane
(II)/alcohol(III) = 1/1 to 1/20 to react both with each other

in the presence of an acid catalyst:

$$R^1$$
— $CH$ — $CH_2$  (II)

wherein R<sup>1</sup> represents a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 4 to 22 carbon atoms;

$$R^2$$
-OH (III)

wherein  $R^2$  represents a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 18 carbon atoms: and

step 2: a step of removing an unreacted alcohol (III) from the reaction product obtained in the step 1 to obtain a composition comprising the diol derivative represented by the formula (I).

- 3. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (B) comprises at least one anionic surfactant.
- 4. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (B) comprises at least one anionic surfactant and at least one selected from a betaine surfactant and a nonionic surfactant.
- 5. The surfactant composition according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the ratio by weight of the component (A) to the component (B), namely (A)/(B), is 1/100 to 50/50.
  - 6. A use of the surfactant composition as claimed in

any one of Claims 1 to 5 as hair detergent.

- 7. A use of the surfactant composition as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 5 as body detergent.
- 8. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (A) is a compound represented by the formula (1):

$$R^{1}$$
— $CH$ — $CH_{2}$ — $O$ — $R^{2}$  (1)

wherein  $R^1$  is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 6 to 21 carbon atoms and  $R^2$  is a straight-chain or branched alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 18 carbon atoms.

- A use of the compound (1) described in Claim 1 or
   to increase foam of a surfactant.
- 10. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the alkyl or alkenyl group of  $R^3$  and  $R^4$  has 6 to 12 carbon atoms and  $R^2$  is an alkyl or alkenyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms.
- 11. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the content of the component (A) in the composition is 0.5 to 5% by weight.
- 12. The surfactant composition according to Claim 3, wherein the content of the component (A) is 3 to 30% by weight based on the anionic surfactant.

- 13. The surfactant composition according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the component (A) comprises a component having a higher molecular weight than the diol derivative (I) including a dimer of the 1,2-epoxyalkane (II).
- 14. A use of the component (A) as described in Claim1 or 2 as body or hair detergent.